



# Rationale and Development of the Move More North Carolina: Recommended Standards for After-School Physical Activity



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## Abstract

**Purpose:** To describe the rationale and procedure employed in developing the *Move More North Carolina: Recommended Standards for After-School Physical Activity* released state-wide in April 2009.  
**Background:**  
• In NC, approximately 152,000 children (< 18yrs) are served in after-school programs.  
• Children served are at highest risk for physical inactivity (e.g. racial/ethnic minorities, impoverished areas)  
• *The Standards* were developed by the Move More After-School Collaborative; a partnership of officials of after-school providers, public health personnel, and scientists.  
• *Standards* can facilitate: 1) programs providing enjoyable, safe and age appropriate PA; 2) family involvement, community partnership and increase access to resources for PA.  
**Methods:**  
• based on current research and expert opinion.  
• informed by: On-line surveys, Focus Groups, literature review, Consensus Panel, and External expert review and, and the Move More After-School Collaborative.  
• recommended best practices can be applied in any program type, and are included for the following categories: Time/Intensity, Qualified Staff/Training, Curriculum, Program Size, Facilities, Equipment, and Evaluation.  
**Conclusion:** The development of *The Standards* can serve as a model for the collaborative development of similar standards in other states.

## Introduction

- North Carolina has a movement called, “Eat Smart, Move More North Carolina” to make it easier for North Carolinians to eat healthy and be physically active.
- As part of legislation, standards have been developed and recommended for schools for both nutritional offerings and PA for children through twelfth grade.
- Until 2009 there were no existing PA recommendations or guidelines for the after-school setting.

## Initial Adoption of *The Standards*

- Each MMAC partner has joint ownership and commitment for implementing *The Standards*.
- Partners are now aligning efforts to support statewide implementation.
- **Examples of early adoption by partners are listed below:**
  - The 21st Century Community Learning Centers, an academically-focused after-school provider, partnered with ECU to create After-School Energizers, short activities (10 minutes) adapted from tools developed for classroom use.
  - The NC Division of Public Health included *The Standards* in the Eat Smart, Move More Community Grants program, a competitive funding opportunity for health departments.
  - The NC CAP Afterschool Funders Group, a group of state and federal funders of after-school programs is including *The Standards* in their Afterschool Funders Work Group Standards Manual.
  - The 4-H, Boys & Girls Clubs and 21st Century Community Learning Centers have all included *The Standards* in staff trainings and annual meetings.
  - The NC Center for After-School Programs and NC AfterSchool Coalition are including PA-specific training sessions in their annual conferences.

## Figure 1. *The Standards*

RECOMMENDED STANDARDS FOR AFTER-SCHOOL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY			
<b>Time/Intensity</b> After-school programs should provide an amount and intensity of physical activity that contributes to the recommended 60 minutes or more daily.	Traditional/enrichment/academic-focused programs—programs that focus on providing after-school supervision, youth development, or teach skills in arts, science, computers, academics or other type of enrichment activities.  Sport/recreation/physical activity-focused programs—programs that focus on promoting physical activity through sport, exercise, recreation or other movement activity.	In a traditional/enrichment/academic-focused program, provide • 20% of daily program time for moderate-to-vigorous* physical activity  In a sport/recreation/physical activity-focused program, provide • 80% of daily program time for moderate-to-vigorous* physical activity	<b>Intensity:</b> *“Moderate” and “vigorous” refer to intensity, or how hard the activity is performed. Moderate physical activity—for children and adolescents, this intensity of activity makes them breathe heavier than normal and makes their heart beat faster than normal. Examples of moderate activity include riding a bike or brisk walking. Vigorous physical activity—for children and adolescents, this intensity of activity makes their heart beat well above normal and makes them breathe harder than normal. Examples of vigorous activity include jumping rope or running.
<b>Qualified Staff/Training</b> Qualified staff are confident in their ability to promote physical activity and are supported by ongoing training and development.	After-school programs: • have staff that are First Aid/CPR certified • provide 16 hours of annual in-service training, including: —new staff orientation —training in healthy/active management	<b>Curriculum</b> Physical activity is a planned and intentional component of the after-school program.	Physical activity is: • integrated with enrichment/academic/recreation content • goal-driven • planned • sequentially designed and delivered • safe, inclusive and developmentally appropriate • success-oriented
<b>Program Size</b> Staff should be able to engage all the participants in the activity.	• 1:15 staff/participant ratio for physical activity time	<b>Facilities</b> Indoor and outdoor environments are safe.	Safety considerations include: • space for children and adolescents to safely move without bumping into each other • appropriate temperature • sufficient lighting • activity space void of hazards • access to drinking water
<b>Equipment</b> Equipment is safe, age- and developmentally appropriate.	Equipment is: • sufficient to engage all participants • meets all required safety standards • age- and developmentally appropriate	<b>Evaluation</b> Results are measured.	Measure at least one aspect of the program. Measures can include: • is physical activity offered as planned? • do participants and staff transition easily from one activity to another? • are staff comfortable leading, offering, encouraging physical activity? • are participants more physically active during the time they are in the after-school program?

## Method

Timeline included formation of an inter-organizational collaborative and a multiphase needs assessment:

### The Move More After-School Collaborative

In the summer of 2007, a meeting of multidisciplinary stake holders was convened to address the topic of PA in after-school settings. This group would eventually become the Move More After-School Collaborative (MMAC). Partners represented groups with interest in child health and/or after-school programs, such as after-school service providers, education advocates, health professionals, and researchers (See Table 1). MMAC determined that PA standards were warranted and agreed that after-school programs offer opportunities for increasing PA for many children.

### Multi-phase Needs Assessment

**Phase 1: Survey.** A survey (N=222) was conducted of after-school service providers to identify barriers and supports for providing PA. Barriers commonly cited were: 1) homework time, 2) staffing (training and numbers), 3) equipment and/or supplies, and 4) location/facility constraints. Resources most commonly cited included: 1) equipment and/or supplies, 2) programming ideas and 3) staff training.

**Phase 2: Literature Review.** A systematic review was conducted to synthesize scientific literature regarding PA in after-school programs. Results were compiled into an annotated bibliography.

**Phase 3: Focus Groups.** Three focus groups were held with service providers. Findings indicated that: (1) barriers to PA in after-school programs are known, common across types of programs and easily identified; (2) there is a need to determine what constitutes quality PA in this setting; and (3) staff need to understand how to provide PA in different types of spaces and need to learn about community resources.

Following phases 1-3, a proposed set of standards was drafted consisting of seven program components (Figure 1).

### Expert Opinion

**Phase 4: Consensus Panel.** A consensus panel was convened to review the draft standards and discuss implementation. The 29-member panel represented various after-school programs, coalitions and networks as well as public schools, public health, recreation and parks and parent volunteer organizations. Panel members felt *The Standards* needed to be flexible, taking into account the various types and settings of programs. *The Standards* were edited based on the feedback.

**Phase 5. Expert Review.** Nineteen professionals, external to the development process, reviewed *The Standards*. Reviewers were chosen based on their role and expertise related to physical activity promotion and/or after-school programs.

## Table 1. Move More After-School Collaborative Organizational Members

4-H Youth Development, North Carolina State University
East Carolina University, Brody School of Medicine
North Carolina AfterSchool Coalition
North Carolina Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs
North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs
North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Support Services Section
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Healthy Schools Section
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, Physical Activity & Nutrition Branch, Children & Youth Branch
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund
North Carolina Parent & Teacher Association
North Carolina Recreation & Park Association
WakeMed Corporate and Community Health
YMCA's of North Carolina

## Conclusions

In Conclusion, *The Standards*:

- Represent the collective work of a diverse collaborative.
- Offer evidence-based best practices and recommendations.
- Have the potential to increase physical activity among thousands of NC youth.
- Require further evaluation to evaluate impact.



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